

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 25, 2005**

Members Present: Morris, Ennis, Carroll, Endres, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Newstadt, Spitzfaden, Thompson and Webb

Members Excused: Timberman and Wasson

Guests: Ed Moczulski (LP Lo-DEL), Dave White (DOL), and Jack Houck (DELVETS)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Morris opened the meeting by thanking everyone for electing him as Chairman. He also reported that he and Vice Chairman Ennis had met and made some new committee appointments.

Mr. Moczulski reported that the National Guard had returned to Milford and he was attempting to make contact with them and help with their needs. Mr. Houck reported that he was standing in for Commissioner Wasson and that DELVETS was having their 7th Annual Toys for Tots run/walk this Sunday, October 30th; starting at the DELVETS Post. There are over 200 signed up for the run and last year they raised more than \$5,000.

Chairman Morris reminded Commissioners to get the money in for the Veterans Day Luncheon tickets. He introduced the Commission's new employee, Tonya Buehler.

MOTION BY SPITZFADEN TO ACCEPT SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY LANK, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Newstadt reported that the Northern Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) meeting for October 11, 2005, was cancelled due to the illness of several members. The Southern FACC meeting scheduled for October 24, 2005, was cancelled due to the weather. After discussion with Mr. Davila and other committee members it appears that it is not necessary to have four meetings a year. They are going to have two scheduled meetings a year with each of the Cemetery Committees, having the option to call a special meeting if necessary. At the November Commission meeting, he will provide the dates of the 2006 scheduled FACC meetings. Commissioner Kitson requested that notification be sent out to everyone when a meeting is cancelled. Chairman Morris commented that he would send out e-mails to all the Commissioners who have addresses and make phone calls to those who did not.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Lank reported that things are moving along for the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, 2005. Col Eugene A. Hebert, Commander of their local Chapter, will be the MC for the ceremony. MG Frank Vavala, Adjutant General, will be the guest speaker. He reiterated that the Commissioners need to sell the luncheon tickets.

FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

No report.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Carroll reported that the total in the Veterans Home fund as of October 24, 2005, is \$155,622.49. He commented on issues brought up at the last Veterans Home meeting. A representative for the contractor brought up that there was a potential savings of about \$8,600 if the style of the stones and brick were changed. The steering committee reviewed the information and decided to stay with the original plan. The representative also brought up the issue of having the dedication on December 7, 2006. The Certificate of Occupancy was not until the end of the year per their contract, which would mean the issue of liability would be placed on the contractor if the event were held prior to that and the

liability insurance was too costly. Commissioner Carroll stated that the issue still needed to be worked out. He also outlined other issues brought up at the meeting and there was discussion. He further reported that the VA's 75th Anniversary at the Wilmington facility went well. Director Citron announced that there is a new Chief of Surgery, a new Director of Behavioral Health, and 4½ new positions have been added. The VA is due for a Joint Commission Inspection and Review and is also undergoing some renovations. Chairman Morris brought up more issues concerning the Veterans Home and discussion followed.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Thompson reported that he is waiting on a call from Speaker of the House Spence's secretary to confirm a meeting time. The Governor is not saying anything, but she might make mention during the State of the State as she did with the Home decision. Commissioner Newstadt commented on a social conversation he had with Rep. Spence in that Rep. Spence indicated he was in favor of the Commission having the overview of the Veterans Home and if the Governor did not make the decision then they were going to introduce legislation to force the issue. Along with the plaque and letter for the City of Milford, Commissioner Carroll mentioned that Richard Carmean, City Manager of Milford, should be recognized for his efforts.

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that the service officer interviews have been conducted and they are in the process of making a final decision. They have posted the Conservation Technician I position for the Northern Cemetery and will be conducting interviews soon. Chairman Morris questioned the status of bringing on the maintenance supervisor for the Veterans Home. Commissioner Lardizzone commented that the Controller General mentioned that he had enough money to hire that position, but the pay grade needed to be finalized before the position could be posted. Also there was funding for the Director of Nursing, a Social Worker, and an Administrative Specialist III.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

Chairman Morris brought up the proposals for the World War II Memorial. Commissioner Lardizzone reported that he was part of the Planning & Selection Committee and provided details of what has transpired to this point. Discussion followed.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Spitzfaden (MOAA) – Questioned the 5K run/walk and discussion followed.

Harden (WAVES) – They had their meeting on October 22, 2005, and she briefed her organization on the status of the Veterans Home. Questions concerning criteria came up. She also briefed them on the VA's 75th Anniversary and it went well.

Kitson (VFW) – VVA Chapter 546 in Sussex County is having a fundraiser at the Road House in Rehoboth on November 3, 2005. VVA will get a portion of the proceeds. The Tomb Trek, VFW Military Order of the Cootie, is November 4-6, 2005, in Washington, DC. November 12, 2005, is the Red, White and Blue Gala at the Sheraton in Dover. The VFW Eastern States Conference is November 18-20 in Washington, DC. Kitson handed out Operation Uplink phone card request forms to be filled out and faxed back to him. The information is requested in order to keep track of the unit. There is no cost to either the military member or the person filling out the form.

Ennis (KWVA) – KWVA held their October Executive Council meeting on October 7, 2005, and the Home Administrator spoke before the group and did a good job. KWVA would like to offer 40 & 8 assistance on Flag Day this year.

Thompson (MCL) – The MCL will kick off "Toys for Tots" on November 1, 2005, and all five attachments will be involved.

Lardizzone (DAV) – The DAV is asking for donations toward a brand new 2006 van for transporting veterans to the VA hospital. Any donations would be appreciated.

Carroll (MOPH) – The Region 1 Commander will be holding a meeting this Saturday at the Holiday Inn in Essington.

Magner (AMVETS) – He talked to Karen Cavanaugh about how many turkeys they could handle and they will deliver approximately 100 turkeys on November 16, 2005. They have identified about 40 families through the social workers at the hospital. For each turkey AMVETS donates, the family will be given a food debit card ranging from \$50 to \$100 and the card has no expiration date. The VA will give out 40 turkeys and keep the rest for needy families at Christmas time. This is a combined effort of AMVETS Posts 1183 and 100.

Morris (American Legion) – The local American Legion Post donated around \$13,000 toward the Katrina relief through the National organization. The American Legion is a major sponsor of the Bush Car Races of NASCAR, this is nationally and the first state to form a booster club for the NASCAR vehicle. For a \$10 fee you can pick up some memorabilia.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Morris asked organizations to gather their financial information so that it could be presented to the legislators in an attempt to get approval for the EZ-Pass.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Ennis mentioned the possibility of having a corner stone lying at the new Veterans Home. The ceremony could be done at anytime, the Masons would need to be notified, and it was suggested that next October is when the next Grand Master comes on board. It is custom to get a medal box and put memorabilia in it from your organizations. If we wanted to do the corner stone lying then we would have to notify the Grand Lodge of Delaware, and start collecting any memorabilia to place in the box. Chairman Morris proposed a new Public Relations Committee be formed because he feels the Commission does not get enough recognition for what they do. There would be a Commissioner from each county and the Committee would coordinate with Mr. Davila to make sure the information was positive and that we did not step on any political toes or individuals. Commissioner Newstadt interjected with his comments and it was decided that this Committee would be formed. Commissioner Morris suggested that the Commission look into establishing some state statutes that could assist veterans and veterans' widows and orphans, as other states may already have. Commissioner Webb strongly backed this idea and presented examples of existing programs in other states. Commissioner Morris asked Commissioners to please look into this and they will discuss it at future meetings.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Newstadt suggested that the Commissioners send a card to Mrs. Bronov in condolence for the loss of her father. Commissioner Morris made mention that with two Cemeteries and soon to be three Service Officers, he felt someone should be presenting an update to the Commission at each meeting. Discussion followed. Commissioner Thompson informed everyone that a report is submitted to Mr. Davila each month from the Cemeteries and Service Officers, and he can brief the Commission.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: **NOVEMBER 22, 2005 (11:00 AM)**

LOCATION: **Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED